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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 003873

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DEPT FOR AF/FO T. SHORTLEY, DAS J. SWAN, AF/C M.  
SEIDENSTRICKER, AF/S R. MARBURG

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TAGS: PREL BY CG SF

SUBJECT: SAG GREAT LAKES ENVOY URGES AID FOR FNL  
"DEFECTORS" AND TALKS WITH NKUNDA

REF: A. BUJUMBURA 751

¶B. DAR ES SALAAM 1447  
¶C. PRETORIA 3651

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. The internal PALIPEHUTU-FNL divisions are complicating the Burundi peace process, according to the South African Government (SAG) Great Lakes Envoy Kingsley Mamabolo. Mamabolo urged the international community to provide protection and humanitarian relief for FNL "defectors," arguing that it would be "irresponsible" to do otherwise. The SAG wants to hold a regional summit on the Burundi peace process in the coming weeks, both to size up the commitment of the parties to the process and renew/revise the Facilitation's mandate. On eastern DRC, South Africa is urging President Kabila to pursue dialogue with rebel leader Laurent Nkunda and other dissident forces. Mamabolo does not believe that Nkunda's exile to South Africa would resolve tensions as another hardline leader would simply take Nkunda's place. Post encourages AF Conflict Advisor Shortley and/or DAS Swan to visit South Africa to consult with Mamabolo and other SAG leaders on Great Lakes issues. END SUMMARY.

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Burundi Process "Very Difficult"  
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¶2. (C) South African Government (SAG) Great Lakes Envoy Kingsley Mamabolo told PolCounselor and PolOff October 31 that the situation in Burundi remains "very difficult." The internal PALIPEHUTU-FNL divisions and recent "defections" of some 1800 soldiers have led to renewed violence (refs A and B), including the brutal killing of at least 35 people. While some in the international community claim that the defectors are not "truly FNL," Mamabolo said it is "irresponsible" not to protect these people and provide them with humanitarian relief -- regardless of their true affiliation. Mamabolo also noted that the "defectors" were armed and thus a destabilizing influence in the country. The verification of the "defectors" as FNL can take place after their security and basic humanitarian needs are met, he argued.

¶3. (C) Commenting on the broader FNL peace process, Mamabolo

noted that "there is something wrong" with a process that has not moved for more than a year. The FNL refuses to implement the September 2006 Ceasefire Agreement and is trying to reopen issues already negotiated, such as the Technical Forces Agreement and power-sharing arrangements. South Africa wants to hold a summit of the Regional Initiative in the coming weeks to review the Ceasefire Agreement and "find out if the parties are serious." "Perhaps we need a new mandate or even a new facilitator," Mamabolo mused. South Africa is trying to schedule the summit, but is having difficulty confirming an available date for Ugandan President Museveni, Mamabolo said.

¶14. (C) Considered a "negative force" in the region, the FNL's refusal to participate in the peace process is a missed opportunity to rehabilitate their image and avoid sanctions, Mamabolo argued. The peace process offered them "legitimacy" and an entry point into the political process. Commenting on their possible motivations, Mamabolo noted that the FNL is the oldest rebel movement and perhaps some of their leadership still have difficulty accepting the "second fiddle" role. Others in the FNL believe that the current CNDD-FDD government will soon "implode" so are trying to buy time until their political environment is more favorable for them.

¶15. (C) Mamabolo acknowledged that the internal divisions on the CNDD-FDD and ruling coalition complicate the peace process. South Africa has urged President Nkurunziza to give former party leader Hussein Rajabu a fair trial. The SAG is also concerned about the lack of transparency in government finances.

¶16. (C) Asked about the role that Institute for Security

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Studies (ISS) consultant Jan van Eck plays in Burundi (ref C), Mamabolo said van Eck is "not helpful." Van Eck has essentially become an "FNL spokesman" and is encouraging them to raise issues that scuttle the process.

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Dialogue Key to Resolving Eastern Congo  
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¶17. (C) On eastern Congo, Mamabolo said that sending renegade rebel leader Laurent Nkunda into exile will not resolve tensions. Another hardline Tutsi leader would simply emerge in Nkunda's place. South Africa would be willing to consider hosting Nkunda, as offered previously, but only if it contributed to lasting peace. (NOTE: Mamabolo said he did not believe that South Africa and DRC have an extradition treaty. END NOTE.) DRC President Kabila is too focused on the military option, Mamabolo argued. While pressure is necessary, a long-term solution to the problems in Eastern Congo requires real dialogue.

¶18. (C) The SAG is urging Rwanda to support national dialogue in Eastern Congo. While the SAG does not believe that President Kagame is supporting Nkunda's military agenda, there is no doubt that "elements in Kigali benefit as individuals" from the situation in Eastern Congo and use Nkunda to protect their interests.

¶19. (C) Mamabolo asked about the role of Senior Advisor on Conflict Resolution Tim Shortley in the DRC. He said that SRSG William Swing told him that Shortley had some interesting ideas on resolving tensions in Eastern Congo. Mamabolo noted that he plans to be in the Great Lakes region for much of November and would look forward to meeting Shortley if they crossed paths.

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Comment and Recommended Action  
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¶10. (C) COMMENT. The Great Lakes region remains one of South Africa's top foreign policy priorities. With nearly 850 troops bogged down in Burundi under an AU mandate, South Africa is losing patience with the continued intransigence of the FNL and is looking for ways either to unblock the process -- or perhaps even to move forward without the FNL. On DRC, where South Africa also has 1200 troops serving in MONUC, Mamabolo was unenthusiastic about the idea of hosting an exiled Nkunda, instead falling back on the common South African mantra than dialogue is the only way to resolve tensions. END COMMENT.

¶11. (C) RECOMMENDED ACTION. Post encourages Senior Advisor Tim Shortley and/or AF DAS Jim Swan to visit South Africa to consult with Mamabolo and other senior SAG leaders on the Great Lakes. Such a visit would offer an opportunity to exchange information and align our actions in this high priority region. In addition, South Africa views itself as the key power in the Great Lakes region and would value senior USG consultations on these issues.

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